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# PREFACE.

THE art of training boys' voices for Church Choir singing has yet to be reduced to simple formulæ, whereby the chief difficulties which beset the path of the young organist or choirmaster may be removed.

This present work is intended to perform the duties of a pioneer in this direction. It is hoped that the remarks and hints herein contained (which are the result of observation and experience during the course of many years) may be useful to all interested in the subject, and may be regarded as the nucleus for the further accumulation of both laws and facts, until a system, as perfect as possible, may be formed and founded for future guidance. It is hardly necessary to say that no literary merit has been aimed at. This work merely contains a set of maxims which, it is hoped, may be of use to young teachers who are intrusted with the musical education of choristers.

Excellent tuition can be obtained in all other branches of the musical profession in almost every part of the Kingdom; but the art of training boys to sing is one which can only be learnt by experience in those places where the culture of boys' voices is not neglected.

Even where the subject is a matter of daily use, it is found that there is often a want of system, and a frequent substitution of "rule of thumb" principles, which in a matter of such importance ought not to be resorted to.

Many organists of great executive ability, severally masters of the mechanical portion of their art, and collectively more skilful than the members of the same profession in any other country, are altogether wanting in power in the art of training boys' voices, from the simple fact that they do not know how to set to work. They have never had the means of learning what they are called upon to teach. The remark made by one of our chief choral conductors some years ago as to the great and almost unaccountable dearth of capable choir-trainers, has not aroused the attention which might have been expected. To this day there are very few skilled labourers employed, although the work is increasing.

The clergy and others are beginning to feel that, although it is necessary to have a good executant at the organ, yet this is not all that is required to secure satisfactory results in the due performance of music in church.

It is not proposed to occupy the ground that is already ably filled by many writers of elementary works on the theory of music. The choirmaster may select the Treatise which best commends itself to his wishes. Here it is only proposed to supply him with a few hints to help him in his work of training boys' voices; and as these hints are intended for the choirmaster only, it has been considered desirable to publish a small cheap copy of the vocal exercises alone, for the use of pupils.

With these, among other considerations, in view, it has been thought proper to offer the remarks and suggestions contained in the following pages as an endeavour to fill the gap existing in musical educational literature.

The Author desires to acknowledge his great indebtedness to his late friend, W. A. Barrett, Vicar Choral of St. Paul's Cathedral, who not only took a warm interest in this little work, but also supplied much valuable assistance in its arrangement.

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# THE ART OF TRAINING CHOIR BOYS.

# CHAPTER I.

#### THE CHOIRMASTER.

- I. HIS QUALITIES.—Many qualities are required to make a successful Choirmaster. In the first place, he should be a good disciplinarian, and he should cultivate, if he does not naturally possess, a happy and sympathetic manner in all his dealings with the choir, both men and boys. He must be energetic and hardworking, a musician by nature, and must possess a very accurate ear, so as to be able to detect the very slightest untunefulness in singing.
- 2. HIS CHARACTER.—He should bring much enthusiasm to help him in his work, so as to kindle a love for the labour which he is called upon to do among his pupils. The science of teaching is better understood now than in days gone by.
- 3. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.—The stick and the cane were sometimes employed to cover want of science on the part of the teachers. The man who possesses, or who can acquire, a certain amount of command over himself will seldom find it necessary to resort to corporal punishment to enforce his precepts.
- 4. Moral Force.—Moral force will subdue even the stupid. The cane will only be required to check impertinent and rebellious boys. The master must show that he is in earnest. Enthusiasm is indispensable. One who approaches his task in a perfunctory manner will only get a half-hearted response to his teaching.
- 5. Interest in the Work.—If he is never interested in what he has to teach, he must not be disappointed if he fails to awaken interest in the minds and demeanour of those who have to learn. The teacher must keep himself under perfect control. He must remember that his pupils are placed under him to acquire knowledge.
- 6. CLEARNESS AND PATIENCE.—Everything he has to say must be stated clearly and firmly. Above all, he must be patient and kind, and when it is necessary to point out mistakes, his remarks should be made without any show of impatience.
- 7. Errors in Practice.—The actual error should be singled out and carefully corrected. A little trouble taken at the outset saves a great amount of labour afterwards, for in the teaching of music, as in the management of domestic concerns, "a stitch in time saves nine."
- 8. Interesting the Choir.—If at the outset of the lesson the teacher will take care to make the subject interesting to his choir, he will find his hands strengthened for his duties. The members of the choir will perceive that they are gaining real knowledge, and the teacher will be able to obtain without commanding punctual and ever eager attendance at the time appointed for practice. The lessons will be looked forward to with pleasure, and the teacher will gain special advantages in the daily improvement of his pupils. If he is able to impart some fact that may be remembered, some peculiarity of the composition under study, some historical or other association relative to the work in hand, he will reap the benefit in a more intelligent performance of it when the time comes for which preparation is being made.

- 9. Interrupting Rehearsals.—Although it is unwise to allow an error to pass unnoticed, yet it is equally unwise to constantly interrupt the course of a general practice for the sake of pointing out mistakes. At sectional rehearsals the case is entirely different, the errors should be amended whenever they occur.
- nade, and at the conclusion he should clearly point out and rectify such errors as have not resolved themselves before repeating the piece. This will obviate the unsatisfactory effect produced upon the choristers when they are called upon to repeat their performance without a reason being given. The oft-repeated words "We'll try that over again," without explaining the reason, are the cause of dissatisfaction, if not of rebellion in a choir.
- II. WASTING TIME.—It is not only a wilful waste of time to go through a long work in the hope that the choir will mend a mistake by themselves, it is also a source of irritation and the means of weakening the interest in the execution. The choirmaster should make every effort to find words of encouragement, even though the performance does not attain the standard he aims at.
- 12. TEACHING AND CONDUCTING.—His duty is not only to conduct, but to teach. The repetition of a mistake confirms it. If it is necessary to try a movement over again, it is but right to indicate the places where improvement in the performances can be effected.
- 13. Boys and Men.—These remarks apply with equal force to the boys as well as to the adult members of the choir. The feelings and thoughts of boys are much more like those of men than is generally supposed. It is the nature of boys to be playful and sometimes inattentive, but as a rule they are possessed of a strong sense of justice, and upon this feeling the choirmaster can work successfully, if he is careful to treat them in such a manner as he would observe towards their elders.
- 14. ART OF TRAINING.—The art of training choristers does not at present form part of the studies at the recognised seminaries of musical knowledge. Many of the future choirmasters have opportunities of learning every useful branch of their art during their state of pupilage, except that which is most needful. There are no professors, and there are very few, if any, books on the subject.
- 15. DISADVANTAGES OF THE YOUNG CHOIRMASTER.—Everything has to be learned by painful experience. There are no means for ascertaining through treatises the results of the labours of their predecessors, which may serve as guides to young choirmasters at the outset of their work.
- 16. Experience.—The successful choirmaster is a man in a hundred, and his success is due to his peculiar aptitude for the work, and his quickness in finding paths for himself over a country where there are few maps or guides. He would be grateful for help did it exist, he would be thankful for hints did he know where to look for them.
- 17. One of the Purposes of this Book.—These pages are written to help and to direct those who have had no opportunities of studying this branch of their profession, and it is sincerely hoped that they may in some degree serve so useful a purpose.

#### CHAPTER II.

# FORMING A CHOIR.

18. VALUE OF A CHOIR.—It is unnecessary in this place to enter into a discussion as to the use of a choir and its value as an adjunct to the celebration of Divine Worship. It is assumed that those who desire to form and instruct a choir are acquainted with, and admit the value of the arguments in its favour.

- 19. EFFECT OF BOYS' VOICES.—The effect of a chorus of well-trained boys' voices has often been the subject of eulogy. The carrying and sustaining power of their voices renders boys singularly fitted for leading the congregation through those parts of the Service in which the compilers of the Prayer Book intended the people to join.
- 20. QUALITY OF BOYS' VOICES.—The devotional element which the clear and unemotional quality of the boy's voice imparts to those portions of the musical service of the Church reserved for the choir is a recognised beauty, when the voices have been properly trained.
- 21. How to BEGIN.—To form an ordinary church choir, the teacher or organist will make his selection from the boys of the school attached to or in connection with the church. Singing is now taught in nearly every school in the Kingdom, and the boys can be selected during the singing hour, and examined and tested at some convenient time after school.
- 22. FURTHER SEARCH FOR VOICES.—If there is no school in connection with the church, other schools might furnish the needful contingent, or the parishioners might be invited to send their children to help in the choir, if their musical capabilities are sufficient for the purpose.
- 23. Advertising for Voices.—If the clergy and the choirmaster are unable to make up the requisite number of voices from the schools or parishioners, then, in towns, recourse must be had to advertisement.
- 24. MIDDLE-CLASS BOARDING SCHOOLS.—Children from middle-class boarding schools, though desirable as an element in the choir by reason of their presumably better training, and so forth, are of little use in forming a choir, as their holidays occur at Christmas, Easter, and other important seasons when their services are most necessary.
- 25. A HINT TO PARENTS.—It is not sufficiently known to parents of the middle and higher classes that schools exist in University and many Cathedral towns where children, provided they have good voices, may receive a fair and, in some cases, a good education free of expense. Many of the best composers and musicians of the present day, as well as of bygone generations, have enjoyed the advantages of early musical training in this way. For many reasons it is the best that can be obtained.

#### CHAPTER III.

#### CHOICE OF VOICES.

- 26. The Age to begin Singing.—Some boys exhibit vocal talent as early as the age of six, but, speaking broadly, they should commence voice cultivation at the age of eight. This is the usual time when children are admitted into Cathedral Choirs, though there have been instances where boys have shown capacity at an earlier age.
- 27. BAD HABITS.—Many choirmasters find that children, even at the age of eight, and sometimes sooner, contract habits of voice production which can never be eradicated and scarcely ever modified. Most of these bad habits are acquired in elementary schools. Children imitate the voice and manner of their teacher, and their style of singing often shows whether the teacher possesses a good or a bad voice.
- 28. Good Voices often spoiled by Bad Patterns.—It might be well if more attention were paid to the matter by the Government Inspectors, and those teachers who have not pleasant voices should be directed to be silent, or to give their lessons with the help of an instrument. Schoolmasters and mistresses should be given to understand that the treatment of boys' voices requires care. They should encourage children to sing softly and with a pleasant tone, and never to force the chest register of the voice. Forcing the chest voice often results in permanent injury to the vocal organ.
  - 29. MISCHIEF OF BAD SINGING.—The ears of the musically sensitive are frequently shocked, in passing

a school at the time of the singing practice, at hearing the merciless manner in which the children are made to yell out their little songs. The method thus acquired influences for evil all their musical performances in after life.

- 30. What to avoid.—The choirmaster, in selecting voices from a school, should take care to refuse all those in which the lower thick register is forced up too high in the scale, unless he has reason to believe that he can cure the defect. As a rule for his guidance, however, it may be asserted that such a production can rarely be cured. It will break out unexpectedly at times when its existence is undesirable. Moreover, in the case of senior boys, it will infect all the juniors. The chest voice should not be used above
- 31. Shouting at Play-time.—Shouting in the play-ground during the progress of exciting games is a fruitful source of temporary and even of permanent injury to the vocal organs. Those boys who are selected to form the choir, or those with good singing voices, should never be allowed to shout. The schoolmaster, the choirmaster, or the teacher should, without appearing to obtrude advice in a manner which could exalt the self-esteem of young singers, teach them to keep their voices in a healthy condition as carefully as older professional vocalists.
- 32. Examination of Voices.—At the examination of voices for the choir, it is necessary first to ascertain the age of the candidate, and to observe his general physical condition. Try his voice by making

him sing scales ranging from to or when possible as far as

33. Preliminary Tests.—Take care not to embarrass the child by giving him passages to sing that may disturb his rudimentary ideas and tend to confuse him. Some masters make their candidates sing passages like the following:—



This is not wise. It is best to form all vocal training upon scale practice from the very beginning.

- 34. COMPLETE SCALE PRACTICE.—The major scale, in its complete form, should be used in the trial of voices. Begin them with the scale of C, then D flat, then D natural, and so on through the whole range required, according to the plan on page I. of the Musical Exercises.
- 35. DIRECTIONS FOR TRIAL.—The sounds of the several scales should be sung to the syllable "La" for each note, and the duration of each note should be about two beats long, the metronome pace of 92 to each beat. Breath must be taken after every fourth note. These directions must be given to the child before he begins to sing. Do not interrupt the course of the scale to correct trivial errors. Note all things mentally, and at the end of the trial record those notes for present satisfaction and future guidance.
- 36. Boys' AND Women's Voices.—It is a common error to suppose that boys' voices are lower in compass than those of women who sing the same part. Exceptional cases will occasionally be met with,

but, as a rule, almost all trained boys can reach in chorus, and even is not an impossible note for them. Those who have had much to do with training the voices of women

and boys find, by experience, that the upper notes of the voice in women

are difficult to get and, when obtained, are neither so powerful nor so tuneful as the same notes in boys' voices.

37. The Junction of Registers.—In trying the voices of candidates after the pattern suggested above, the teacher will note that there is a place in the scale where the singer naturally alters the quality of the tone. This takes place in various parts of the scale according to the voice, but is chiefly on or about . The change is from the "chest" to the "head" voice, and is called the "Break." Should this be very apparent—especially in a boy over the age of ten—it might be wise to reject him. The management of the Break is one of the great difficulties which the teacher has to encounter.

#### CHAPTER IV.

#### ARRANGEMENT OF VOICES.

- 38. Successful Candidates.—The choirmaster, having selected the boys required, will now arrange them according to his needs. He will have noted that the boys who are likely to be most valuable to him will possess the following qualifications:—
- 39. Compass of Voices.—(a) A voice of fair quality and promise. The quality will be patent upon the trial, the promise will be indicated by the possession of plenty of "ring," free from huskiness and nasal tone, and the possibility of development as to fulness and musical character. (b) A voice of sufficient

to the upper A without difficulty. This should be taken as the limit at the time of trial in .

ordinary cases. Abnormal instances will of course present themselves; these may be dealt with as they occur, and the master may see fit to extend the tests above and below. A fair compass may be considered

voice than the compass at this age.

- 40. TEST OF A GOOD EAR.—The candidate must possess a good ear, so as to be able to distinguish and to imitate with readiness a variety of sounds sung or played. One of the best tests of an accurate ear is to play or sing a series of sounds having no scale connection the one with the other, after the following manner:—
  - 41. PRACTICAL EAR TESTS.—



Each note is to be repeated by the voice of the candidate immediately after it has been sounded on the pianoforte.

- 42. ACCURACY OF EAR.—Accuracy of ear will soon be discovered after trial of one or other of the above or similar tests. Very few children will have had sufficient previous training to enable them to name notes, though some may possibly have learned enough music in school to be able to give the names of certain notes taken out of the scale. The experiment might be tried, if desired, with a few groups of notes like the following:—
  - 43. Naming Notes.—Ear tests. Each section to be sung or played by the master.



The master might name the first note of each section, the pupils naming the others. Ear tests such as these will be found very useful after the boys have been a little time under tuition, and they can be gradually increased in difficulty.

- 44. Singing out of Tune.—Boys sing out of tune for several reasons: (a) When they force the "chest" register beyond its proper limit; (b) When they do not open their mouths properly; (c) When they are ill; (d) When they are tired, idle, or inattentive.
  - 45. Exercise for Tuneful Singing.—To be used after any Exercises in the second part.



- 46. Remedies for Singing out of Tune.—The habit of forcing the "chest" register, as before hinted, may be counteracted by judicious training, provided that the boy is young—that is to say, up to eight years of age. The evil is not then too firmly rooted, and may be eradicated. If the habit continues up to eleven or twelve years of age, it is almost impossible to remove it. If it is not possible to reject the boy who sings in this manner, the labour involved in curing the defect is often thrown away, for by the time the fault is cured the boy's soprano voice has probably left him, and he is then, as he always was, useless for the choir. These remarks apply to solo voices chiefly. A boy with a bad break may be useful as a chorus singer, but he is not desirable even in this capacity.
- 47. OPENING THE MOUTH.—Boys should be taught to open the mouth properly, and never to sing with the teeth closed. The tongue must not be curled up, but must lie naturally in the mouth, the tip slightly touching the lower teeth. Many masters enjoin an unnatural extension of the mouth in singing. Some even insert a shilling held edgewise between the teeth. The best plan is to make each boy place his thumb edgewise as far as the first joint. Then the mouth is opened in its natural position for singing. The thumb is then to be drawn gently away, leaving the teeth in the position they occupied when the thumb was between them. The head should be held erect, and any tendency towards throwing forward the chin should be checked at once.
- 48. TIRED, SICK, AND IDLE BOYS.—No master would compel boys to sing when they are tired or unwell. If other signs fail, his observation will be aroused by the untuneful singing among those who ordinarily sing well in tune. If a good boy sings out of tune through illness, weariness, or nervous agitation, he should be treated kindly and allowed to be silent for a while. If a boy

sings out of tune through idleness, obstinacy, or inattention, a severe look is often sufficient to restore propriety of conduct. Sarcasm and personal comments are to be strenuously avoided.

- 49. INABILITY TO RECOGNISE SOUNDS.—The inability to recognise and to reproduce sounds is much rarer in boys than is generally supposed. If a boy constantly sings out of tune, either flat or sharp, his services might be dispensed with, supposing him to have been admitted to the choir. If, at the trial of voices, a boy is unable at once to reproduce sounds sung or played to him, he should not be chosen, as he is never likely to be useful.
- 50. HEAD REGISTER.—A young boy with a good head register should always be accepted, even though his lower notes are weak. In nine cases out of ten the lower register will develop with time, and its quality will always be superior to that of voices which have the stronger lower register at the outset. If a boy of twelve or thirteen gradually becomes possessed of a powerful head voice, it generally forebodes the equally gradual extinction of his chest register. For this no remedy can be found. With the eventual collapse of the head voice, the whole vocal register will be rapidly transformed into that "gruff" quality which is the transitional stage between the boy's voice and the man's.

#### CHAPTER V.

## QUALITY OF VOICES.

- 51. Knowledge of Music.—It is hardly to be expected that boys, at the early age of their admission into a choir, should have much knowledge of the grammar of music. It will be as well therefore, to take no consideration of this matter at the time of the entrance examination. If, however, a candidate shows signs of musical talent, either by performing upon an instrument, or by displaying an acute musical ear, or a sense of absolute pitch, he should be considered eligible even if his voice is not up to the standard required. His influence on the general musical taste of the other boys may be of immense advantage.
- 52. DIFFERENT QUALITIES OF VOICES.—The qualities of boys' voices may be divided into several classes, of which four are most characteristic. First, there is the large, horn-like tone, which, when it does not develop huskiness, is of great value. Second, there is the light, flute-like voice of high compass and of considerable natural flexibility, which bears a strong likeness to the high soprano possessed by some, though very few, females. Third, there is the voice of a reedy penetrating quality of tone, having many of the peculiarities of the second order. And fourth, the most common voice of all, that of fair compass but almost devoid of ring, and almost incapable of varied expression.
- 53. SELECTION OF VOICES.—There will be no hesitation on the part of the choirmaster in selecting the first three qualities. If among the candidates there is a preponderance of these, so much the better for the choir and so much greater its prospective advantage. Unfortunately, the master has often no other quality of voice to choose from than that of the fourth and most common order. Provided there is a sufficient number to produce the necessary strength of tone, there is no reason why such voices should be excluded.
- 54. JUDGING VOICES.—It is much easier to judge of tenor or bass voices than of the voices of boys. At the age of twenty-four or so, a man's voice, though likely to improve, is already a settled reality. At the age of eight a boy's voice must be estimated according to its possibility, its compass, and its natural tendency towards good production, rather than from any actual condition at the time of examination.
- 55. CHANGES IN THE VOICE.—The rapid changes which take place in a boy's voice from time to time are quite extraordinary. It frequently happens that a voice, which for a long period has been almost without any special promise, suddenly develops into a most useful one. In no other branches of vocal

training are such changes observable. The master will see the necessity of constant watchfulness so as to take immediate advantage of these unexpected transitions.

- 56. Providing for Changes.—It is good practice to make all the boys occasionally sing solos by turns at rehearsals. By this means the master is hardly likely to overlook the signs of changes in the voices of the boys. Apart from the fact that such a proceeding enables him to provide against failures to maintain the standard of work as far as possible, it inspires the boys with a certain amount of confidence, so that when called upon they are not likely to do the solo work so ill as when they are more or less unprepared.
- 57. ALTERATION OF VOICES BY PRACTICE.—A boy of ten years of age, supposing that he has had the advantage of good training for about a year, will possess a greater range upwards than he is ever likely to maintain afterwards. Moreover, the quality of tone will, as time goes on, probably alter to such an extent as not to be recognisable. This is owing to the rapid growth and enlargement of the physical system which takes place at this period.
- 58. THE END OF THE TRIAL.—The foregoing paragraphs show the salient features of the various kinds of voices the choirmaster is likely to meet with in the course of trials of candidates for the choir. He is certain to find one or other of the classes enumerated. He will consider himself peculiarly fortunate if he can form his choir out of a fairly good number of voices which show the best of the characteristic qualities described above, at the end of the trial of candidates.

# CHAPTER VI.

## THE PLACE FOR, AND THE METHOD OF PRACTICE.

- 59. THE PRACTICE ROOM.—The voices having been selected, the next thing to be considered is the choice of the place for practice. As a rule, it will be best to select the school-room in connection with the church as the proper place. The necessary apparatus, the black-board and the desks, are all handy, and there is a general air of discipline in the arrangements and surroundings which are helpful to the teacher.
- 60. Practice in Church.—It is best to avoid general practising in church, unless it is necessary to finish off any work with the assistance of the organ; even then it is advisable to take care to remember the solemnity of the place, and to say or do nothing that might be considered as inconsistent with proper behaviour.
- 61. Training Exercises.—As many of the vocal exercises necessary for the proper training of boys' voices are distinctly secular in character, they cannot be used with propriety in church. As, moreover, they are of the utmost value in developing vocal tone and flexibility of execution, the progress of the children would be more or less retarded if no other place than the church were available for the daily practice.
- 62. PRACTICE IN THE VESTRY.—Some churches have a large room or vestry ordinarily used for parish purposes. Where such a room exists the practices may there be carried on successfully. The choir-books might be kept there and the master would be able to make his teaching more effective and interesting than would be allowable or decent in a sacred building.
- 63. Practising with the Organ.—There are many hindrances to progress if the organ is employed for accompanying exercises in the customary music lessons. The master cannot always see his pupils, and therefore he cannot teach really well. Besides this particular disadvantage, the organ is not the best instrument for teaching of this kind, on account of the great difficulty in making and regulating those rapid and subtle changes of tone which are so necessary in forming and guiding the taste of children.

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- 64. PROPER INSTRUMENT FOR PRACTICE.—The proper instrument for accompanying the exercises is the pianoforte, and the proper pianoforte is that with horizontal strings, as in the "grands" and "squares." The form of these instruments admits of the arrangement of the children so that they may be always under the master's eye. The shape and structure of the "cottage" and "upright" instruments places the master almost at as much disadvantage as if he were at the organ.
- 65. The Harmonium.—In many places the harmonium only is available for practice. A good and large instrument may possibly possess some claims to consideration. Many of the large ones are not good, because they simply multiply the undesirable qualities of the instrument as an accompaniment to the voice. If they must be used, they should be employed very sparingly. The master should start the exercise, but should not accompany it throughout, or the children may acquire a nasal production of tone and a drawling style of vocalisation, neither of which can be reasonably considered as desirable qualities in singing.
- 66. POPULAR ERRORS CONCERNING CATHEDRAL SINGING.—A great many people suppose that all the children of the choirs of various Cathedrals sing well because they possess excellent voices. This is a mistake. Almost all the charming quality of vocal tone observed in the choirs of Cathedrals is acquired in the practice-room. The voices which are presented to many country Cathedral organists for selection and training are rarely any better than those which are offered to the choirmaster of an ordinary parish church, and are frequently not so good.
- 67. Training is everything.—It is the regular training obtained in the practice room of the Cathedral which produces the result so much admired and so worthy of admiration. The choirmaster who would attain a like effect must resort to like means. He will be able to secure a good chorus-tone in a very short time, if he maintains regular and frequent practice with the assistance of such exercises as are given in the present work, even though the material he has to deal with at the outset is but of mediocre quality.
- 68. Lessons and Exercises.—The lessons and exercises given herein are arranged in three sections, graduated in a form which has been dictated by long experience. If they are rightly used, they will be found to be as valuable to the village choirmaster as to the Cathedral organist. The basis of the elementary teaching is the same in either case.
- 69. REGULARITY IN PRACTICE.—It is unreasonable to expect good results without careful and regular labour. Spasmodic and intermittent attempts are useless. It is recommended that the exercises be employed in the manner in which they are set out. All must be fairly and properly practised. Regularity in practice must be observed, not only with regard to the days and hours properly appointed, but also with regard to the sequence of the exercises, if real progress is desired.

#### CHAPTER VII.

#### FURTHER DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTICE.

- 70. FORMATION OF CLASSES.—The selection of voices having been made, the rules for practice carefully studied, the place for practice settled, and other necessary matters attended to, the next step to be taken is to arrange and form the class.
- 71. How TO FORM THE CLASS.—The class should be formed in three divisions or rows, one behind the other. The senior boys should be placed in the back row, boys about ten years of age should be ranged in the second row, and the younger ones in front. This plan should be adopted because, among other reasons, different treatment is sometimes required for boys of different ages.
  - 72. Promotion in Class.—A boy who is diligent and attentive should be transferred to a higher rank

if possible, and when this is done it has always been found beneficial to mark the event by some special notice. It will be found most useful to encourage the spirit of emulation.

- 73. METHOD, TACT, AND DISCIPLINE.—It has already been stated that the master should be possessed of method, tact, and discipline. These three qualities are essentially necessary in all who would succeed in the labour of teaching. Many clever musicians are not good teachers for the simple reason that they have never learned how to set to work. A few observations on this subject will be found in Chapter VIII.
- 74. VALUE OF ORDER AND REGULARITY.—Those who have been present at examinations in large schools where elementary music is taught as part of the system of education, could not fail to observe the value of order and regularity in teaching. An ordinary schoolmaster who has learned the method of giving lessons, with perhaps less than a quarter of the knowledge of the music teacher who has not learned such a lesson, will accomplish much more because he has studied the *rationale* of his art.
- 75. Superior Knowledge of the Subject.—Some music teachers think that their superior knowledge of their subject is sufficient, and that the art of teaching will come of itself without preparation. This is an error. The art of teaching, like the art of performing upon an instrument, must be learned with much pains and trouble.
- 76. Provision for Teaching Teachers.—It would be a great advantage if the great institutions for making musicians could be induced to provide means for the instruction of those who propose to become teachers. A man may be well skilled in the technical portion of his art. He may be able to play well and to sing well. He should also be taught to teach scientifically.
- 77. ORDINARY ERRORS IN TEACHING.—Many musicians think that the elements of music are so simple that a mere informal and even an unmethodical statement of facts is sufficient. They are impatient and astonished when the results of their lessons are not so complete and satisfactory as they desire.
- 78. EVERY LESSON SHOULD BE PREPARED.—Every lesson should be carefully thought out and prepared beforehand. Every new lesson should be preceded by a recapitulation of the last one. All new facts, all new information should be based upon, or grow out of, that which has been previously taught. The master should take care to see that what has been taught has been learned; and he should make his pupils discover as much as possible for themselves.

# CHAPTER VIII.

#### METHOD, TACT, AND DISCIPLINE.

79. METHOD.—Good teaching should be slow and thorough, though not dilatory. "Never hurry, but never rest," is a good motto. Education is a very slow process, and the teaching of a subject should be step by step, and very short steps too. Each lesson in the Theory of Music must be so graduated as to be entirely within the grasp of the minds of the pupils. Be careful to find out what is possible for the children to learn, and adapt the teaching to their capacities. Mark out carefully how much is to be taught in, say, a month or a week, and, as a rule, do not exceed the amount. Children commit to memory very quickly, but forget as quickly; so it is necessary to revise and re-revise the lessons constantly. As soon as a lesson is learned, turn it to some real practical account—for instance, before trying over a piece of music, make a practice of illustrating as much as possible what has recently been learned. Examine the pupils on the key, time, marks of expression, intervals, &c. Try to make the pupils think for themselves, guiding them, and smoothing the difficulties for them. Endeavour to be in the practice-room some little time before the practice hour. See that all books are ready at hand,

and appoint two senior boys to give out the music and two others to collect each piece as soon as it is done with, so that not a moment may be lost. "Hard work and short hours" is another good motto.

- 80. CHOIRMASTERS.—It may be justly said that the salary which choirmasters and organists usually receive is quite inadequate for the work here laid down as necessary; but be sure of this, that those who give unstinted and effective labour will most certainly obtain the best appointments; and remember that really competent choirmasters are much sought after, and, as compared with executants, are exceedingly scarce. In these days of high pressure, method and discipline are all-important factors in the success of a choirmaster.
- 81. TACT.—Tact is required not only in the management of the class and the individual boys, but also in dealing with any difficulty that may arise. The true tactician, like the poet, is born not made. Still, by a careful study of the rules of method and a knowledge of the means to establish good discipline, the master may so arm himself as to seem to be a good tactician, and so conduct his class, and be ready for any emergencies that may possibly arise in the course of his work, that his common sense will serve all purposes.
- 82. DISCIPLINE.—The choirmaster who would maintain good discipline must first know what is necessary to secure it. He should exercise discretion in giving commands, and should insist upon exact obedience. His manner should be dignified and decided, but not obtrusive. He should not be noisy. He should not speak more than is necessary.
- 83. OBEDIENCE.—The master must avoid talking about order and discipline. He should not threaten punishment if obedience is not rendered. He should behave as though he did not expect transgression or disobedience. The discretion in giving commands will obviate the necessity of retracting them. If a rule is made, it must be obeyed. The master must never waver in obedience to his own law. He should not embarrass the pupil with too many commands. Obedience is as much a habit as attention. All habits are strengthened by frequent repetition.
- 84. The Law of Habit.—Dr. Fitch confirms this view when he says "Obedience and attention are habits subject to the same law as other habits. The law is that an act frequently repeated becomes easy to us, one seldom repeated is difficult; all habits are strengthened by repeated acts. Habits make character, though character again reacts on habits." This law has an important bearing on school work. For every time your pupils come into your presence the habit of obedience is being either confirmed or weakened, they are being trained either to prompt and exact obedience, an orderly and observant mind, or the reverse.

#### CHAPTER IX.

# QUALITIES OF A GOOD TEACHER.

- 85. THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD TEACHER.—The qualities most noticeable in a good teacher are therefore a quiet yet dignified demeanour, a direct and clear way of expressing ideas either in teaching or giving orders, a kindliness of manner, and a never failing firmness of bearing. He is able to command respect from his pupils for his justice of manner, and this respect is genuine and uninfluenced by fear.
- 86. The Quality of Good Teaching.—It has already been said that teaching should be "slow and thorough, though not dilatory." There is no doubt that too little time is given to the teaching of musical grammar, the basis of all sound musical education. The master should not grudge taking pains. He should teach carefully and thoroughly, and not expect his pupils "to manage somehow to pick up the music" under rehearsal.
- 87. Repetition.—By repetition, it is true, the lessons are learned; but no amount of repetition is of any value unless the reason for it is shown. The master who thinks that children can "pick up" knowledge

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as chickens pick up grain, forgets that it is first necessary that the grain should be laid down. The same amount of trouble taken to teach children by rote, would produce more valuable results in the future if they were taught to sing by note. The system of repetition without a basis of knowledge is most unsatisfactory and ought not to be tolerated in teaching music, any more than it would be in any other subject.

- 88. Pulling Through.—If the master teaches his boys thoroughly, he will be spared many troubles. If knowledge is combined with practice, boys will learn many things in music that are valuable to them in after life. If the teaching is not thorough and consistent, boys become sick and tired of the constant repetition; the performance is never to be depended upon, and the teacher has to be satisfied with having "pulled through" all right.
- 89. LIKE MASTER, LIKE BOYS.—If the master does not do his work properly, his boys will not do theirs. They will exercise an extraordinary amount of ingenuity to evade their duties, if they are not well looked after. If he becomes peevish and impatient because of their conduct, similar sentiments will actuate their little actions.
- go. Punishment.—Corporal punishment should only be resorted to in extreme cases. The master should study his pupils well, and learn their various dispositions, and mete out his chastisements accordingly. That which will deter one boy will often incite another to commit an offence. If the master knows his boys, corporal punishment will be less effective than moral punishment.
- 91. REWARDS.—Boys should not be encouraged to work in the hope of attaining any other reward than that which comes from the satisfaction of having done well. The master's privilege of grumbling at unsatisfactory work should, if it is exercised, be balanced by such words of encouragement as he may be able to offer wherever the opportunity occurs.
- 92. BULLYING.—The teacher must take care to avoid goading boys when they are backward and dull. If a child is unable after trial to perceive the force of what he is told, he must be left alone for a while. Some other subject may be taken up in the meantime, and then when a return is made to the original question, the boy will probably have recovered his intelligence. The master should never bully nor countenance bullying. Offenders against this rule should be made to suffer short, sharp, yet salutary punishment, even though the rule of the school is against punishment.
- 93. Common Schoolboy Faults.—The common faults of schoolboys are unpunctuality, laziness, untidiness, insubordination, carelessness, and sullenness. These are often encouraged by a want of knowledge of boys' character in the teacher. In each case the boy should be made to see the injury he is doing to himself by the practice of or continuance in a bad habit, and the master must reason with him and make him see his error rather than resort to hasty punishment. The position which a chorister holds, and the constant association with higher things, will probably do much towards mitigating the practice of these vices, and perhaps will eradicate them altogether. Yet the master should be prepared to deal with them if they present themselves.

# CHAPTER X.

#### MUSICAL INSTRUCTION.

- 94. Musical Education in Choirs.—It may be regarded as a great misfortune that in so many choirs where elaborate music is performed, the state of real musical education is so low. Much of the time which is set apart to make boys sing, parrot-like, music which can only be well performed when the understanding is also well cultivated, might be devoted to such cultivation as is necessary. It is therefore both right and proper that musical education in choirs should be thorough and complete.
  - 95. THEORY AND VOICE CULTURE.—In the practice for boys alone, part of the time should be given

to the study of theory, another part to vocal practice and voice culture, and the remainder to rehearsing the music for the next services. The theory should be taken piecemeal. At the outset, the time should be devoted to the names and value of all notes and their corresponding rests—the stave, clefs, and so forth. All the elementary work should be carefully disposed. Then, for another week or so, an explanation of the time signatures should occupy attention, and so on through the various stages of elementary theory. There should be occasional examinations to test the value of the work done, and, if possible, prizes should be given to the most satisfactory pupils. At all events, some special encouragement should be given to those who have done well.

- 96. Working in New Fields.—When a choirmaster enters upon a new field of work, and finds his choir much below the mark in knowledge of theory and voice culture, it is a good plan to simplify the singing for a time, until the standard can be raised. If the method of singing is bad, the amount of singing during the service should be lessened for a time. It is during the performance of the music for the service that all the old bad habits are practised unchecked. The choirmaster is unable to prevent them. When a young choirmaster undertakes new duties in a church where a choir is already established, if he finds that the boys sing chiefly or entirely from the chest voice, he should form a probationary choir, and train the new boys according to the instructions contained in this book. After six months or so they may be drafted into the choir as occasion arises, but up to the time of their admission they should be trained separately and kept carefully apart, so that the bad habits of the old choir may not be learned by the probationers.
- 97. SINGING DIFFICULT MUSIC.—Difficult music should never be attempted while the choir is in such a condition as that named above. Everything should be as simple as possible until matters are placed upon a different basis. In numberless cases far too much is attempted, and the ambition of the choir prompts them to undertake music which is beyond their powers, to the detriment of the service in which they take part.
- 98. SINGING AS AN ART.—It is a matter for much regret that too little time is given by choirmasters to the study of singing as an art. This fact should not be overlooked. If a choirmaster takes an interest in his work, he will so drill his boys that they will be able to sing the ordinary solos in the anthems and services in common use, not only sufficiently well at the ordinary services, but also on festival occasions when special importance is given to the music.
- 99. Reading at Sight.—A good choir, men and boys, ought to be able to read ordinary music at sight. It ought not to be necessary to try pieces of moderately difficult music many times before making it as perfect as circumstances will permit. The black-board should be in constant use, and at first, at each lesson, the scale of C major should be written out, and the boys requested to sing any note pointed out by the teacher. This should form part of almost every lesson. Later on, other scales may be taken and accidentals introduced. Another most useful exercise is to distribute a collection of chants, single and double, and sing them through in consecutive order, the teacher explaining the new scale to the pupils when necessary; but to do this with any success, considerable advance must have been made in the theory of music.
- 100. QUALITY OF TONE IN SINGING.—The quality of tone produced by the boys in the practice-room, and by the whole choir combined, should be pure and free from harshness, and the enunciation as clear as possible. The shape of the resonance box formed by the hollow of the mouth materially affects the quality of the tone produced. The master should be careful to check all that kind of singing which is called "throaty," but which might be more accurately described as "tonsillitic," and stop every form of nasal production. (See paragraph 47.)
- IOI. ENUNCIATION.—Care should be taken to secure good enunciation of the words to be sung. It is not necessary here to point out all the faults of pronunciation likely to be met with by the choirmaster in

the course of his duties. If he is observant, he will note them for himself. As a general rule, it may be as well to call attention to the value of the consonants in the words which are to be sung, and to endeavour to promote uniformity of pronunciation of the vowel sounds. Boys in and near London pronounce the English a as in "face" as though it were written "foice," or, when there are any pretensions to refinement, as though it were written "fece." Thus "grace" may be either "groice" or "grece," "no" is "now," "yes" is "yus," and there are other peculiarities of pronunciation which must be checked and corrected. With country boys, the rolling of the letter "r" is not to be counted so great a fault as the peculiar rustic "burr" with which the sound is uttered. A fault common to boys of all kinds, metropolitan or provincial, is that of running words one into the other, or tacking the final consonant on to a following word which begins with a vowel, or omitting important consonants. Thus, "my stony rock, and my defence" becomes "my stonyrockon myde fence"; "As it was in the beginning, is now," becomes "As it was sin the beginnin' nis now"; "And ever shall be" is made to sound as though it were written "An dever shalby." Special attention should be paid to clear enunciation in the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed. These being so well known and so frequently repeated, become at times, through carelessness, almost unintelligible, and the effect most irreverent.

102. Expression.—Expression in music is not only the due observance of light and shade in performance, but also includes the accurate association of the musical sounds with the words, so that the full intention of the composer's music and the meaning of the words may be properly conveyed. Expression in music is regulated oratory guided by defined tones and well ordered rhythm. These qualities are instantly felt by the hearers if they are carefully attended to by the performers. Too much trouble cannot be taken to present them properly; even during a hurried practice they must always be observed carefully.

103. ACCOMPANIMENTS.—There is no doubt that a good organist can instinctively inspire his choir to the delivery of music expressively. There is always a strong feeling of sympathy awakened in the minds of singers, if they feel that they are well supported in their efforts by the organist. He has much more influence over the performance of the singers than is generally imagined. On his part, therefore, it is necessary that he should play with the greatest care and refinement with regard to expression in the accompaniments. If anything, at rehearsals he should err in making too much of the changes of time and mood indicated by the composer in his music. Besides this, his playing should indicate, as clearly as possible, all those subtle shades of expression which are understood, but are not always marked in the composition.

104. THE PIANOFORTE.—As before intimated, the pianoforte has been advocated as preferable to any other instrument for accompanying vocal exercises and the music for the services and anthems in practice time. It responds more readily to the ever-varying ideas of the player, and greatly helps to emphasise those degrees of expression which are necessary in all good singing.

reproduce, in their several parts, those ideas as to expression which have been suggested by the player. The result will be a great assistance towards the highest aims a choir should have in view. On the other hand, the organist is certain that whatever failings he may possess and exhibit in his performance, they will appear in an exaggerated form in his pupils. It is therefore of the utmost importance that he should always play with the greatest care, and keep in view the highest aim to gain a sympathetic rendering of the words associated with music.

#### CHAPTER XI.

#### THE BREAKING OF THE BOY'S VOICE.

- 106. THE BREAKING OF THE VOICE.—The most disheartening experience in the work of the choirmaster occurs when his most carefully trained, and perhaps his best boy, suffers that inevitable change which is generally known as the breaking of the voice. For this reason it has been urged that no musician is placed in so unsatisfactory a position as the choirmaster.
- IO7. CUSTOMARY EXPERIENCES.—Notwithstanding the fact that the breaking of the boy's voice is one of the customary experiences of the choirmaster, it is a matter which always brings with it a great amount of regret. The boy candidate presents himself for trial, say at about eight years of age. He is admitted to the choir, and for about two years he appears to be of no appreciable value. At eleven, or thereabouts, perhaps, his voice begins to show signs of development and promise. He continues to improve until he is about twelve, then possibly for two years or so his voice is at its best. Then comes total collapse.
- 108. Provision against Accidents.—Taking this matter into consideration, it is a mistake to have too many boys of the same age in the choir; if so, many breaks will occur about the same time, and the choir will be reduced to an inefficient state. The young choirmaster should not overlook this fact, as it is of vital importance. It is therefore necessary to provide against accidents of this sort, and to arrange the choir in manner conformable.
- 109. How to Arrange A Working Choir.—In a working choir of about sixteen boys, the ages of the children should be thus arranged:—

There should also be at least four probationers from eight to nine years of age.

- IIO. UNIFORMITY IN CHOIR SINGING.—It may not always be found possible to follow this scheme entirely, but if it were kept in view, and an earnest endeavour made to adhere to it as far as possible, a great uniformity of singing in the choir would be obtained and a regular succession of voices kept up. The teaching of the choirmaster would show more even effects, and the tradition he has established would be more equally maintained.
- III. PROBATIONERS.—The choirmaster should recognise the necessity of having plenty of young probationers under training so as to supply vacant places, and separate practices may be organised for them. Immediately a voice shows decided symptoms of change or of breaking, its place should be supplied by one or other of the probationers.
- should never be done. It is likely to injure the vocal tone for ever after. Many otherwise fair musicians have been deprived of vocal power by this reprehensible practice. A boy whose voice is changed or broken, ought no more to be allowed to sing than a man with a fractured limb ought to be permitted to walk or use it. There is no doubt that many valuable voices are lost through overstraining their powers at the period of the break. The custom of retaining boys in the choir after the change has commenced, although it has some scientific defenders, is to be deplored.
- organs at this period will never, as men, possess good voices. They may be able to sing well, it is true, because they have learned the principles of voice production, but in most instances all vocal tone has been destroyed. The practice of allowing boys to sing while their voices are in a transitional state is unartistic

(as the tone is unnatural), and the effect is so painful that all pleasure in the music they perform is totally extinguished. An apparent exception to this rule sometimes occurs with very light or thin voices, which never appear to break (in the ordinary sense of the word) at all. These generally develop gradually into alto voices.

II4. THE PERIOD OF THE BREAK.—The breaking of the voice takes place between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. Cases outside these limits are exceptional. Voices have been known to retain their treble quality up to the age of twenty-four years; others have collapsed at twelve. The process is sometimes rapid, and occupies only a few days. With some boys it is extended over a year, and even over two years.

TI5. SYMPTOMS OF THE BREAK.—Sometimes the higher notes disappear for a considerable time before the lower ones are affected. Sometimes the lower register becomes unnaturally weak and unmanageable, while the upper notes retain their usual quality. Sometimes the voice becomes very hoarse, and the boy is under the impression that it is under the influence of a bad cold. Frequently there is a separation between the upper and the lower registers of the voice, with

TIG. RARE CASES.—There are cases which may possibly fall within the experience of young choirmasters, although they are very rare. One, where the voice is only slightly affected, and without any apparent reason remains without further change for a year or more. Another where the voice never seems to break at all, but the lower register becomes thicker and more manly in tone. Another where the singing voice retains the register of an octave between of the "childish treble," while the speaking voice only becomes fuller and gruff in tone.

downwards, while the notes between are liable to "fly." Again, the speaking voice frequently changes before the singing voice is affected. In fact, there are numberless symptoms which may present themselves in the ordinary course of voice changing. Probably no two are entirely alike.

118. Opinions of Physiologists.—Various opinions are advanced by physiologists as to what actually takes place in the vocal organs at the period of the breaking of the voice. They are all very interesting, but as they do not come within the scope of the present work, it is unnecessary to do more than allude to them. The young choirmaster, however much he may be attracted by the subject, is advised not to waste his time in studying it, more especially as physiologists, with all their knowledge and their worthy anxiety to advance the cause of science, are at present unsuccessful in agreeing with each other.

## CHAPTER XII.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

119. ORDINARY DISAPPOINTMENTS.—One of the most ordinary disappointments experienced by the young choirmaster is when he finds that boys do not always fulfil early promise. This may proceed from several reasons. The great physical changes already mentioned, which take place in the first years of boy life, may deteriorate instead of developing the voice. Health, nervousness, want of musical taste or of intellect, and many other causes may affect the culture of the voice, and give rise to disappointment.

120. Bodily Exercises.—All exercises which tend to promote the health of the body, provided that they are not too violent, are believed in the long run to be beneficial to the voice. In choir schools, where

singing forms the principal part of the boy's duty, special care should be taken in the choice of suitable games. Those games in which shouting is considered a necessary element should not be indulged in. The exercise of the voice in shouting overstrains it and brings on hoarseness, and perhaps loss of vocal power.

121. EATING.—Great care should be taken to feed singing boys properly, and all indigestible and harmful food should be avoided and forbidden. Eating nuts should not be permitted at any time. Some masters permit the indulgence after work is over and singing is finished for the day. But nuts are not easily digested, and may throw the eater out of health and incapacitate him for his work for days to come.

122. SCHOOLING FOR CHORISTERS.—Where a special choir school is found to be too expensive, it is a good plan to make arrangements with an ordinary school in the neighbourhood to take the choristers for the purpose of education apart from music. The choirmaster should arrange to attend immediately the general school work is done, either daily or at specified intervals, not less than three times a week for half-an-hour's practice in vocal exercises and for instruction in the grammar of music.

123. WEEKLY PRACTICE.—There should be two evening practices in each week besides those mentioned above: both should be held in the choir room or vestry, one for the boys alone and the other for the full rehearsal of all the choir. These rehearsals should be carefully planned with regard to the allowance of time for each subject. The music for the service will, of course, claim chief consideration.

which arise from the lack of power to sustain certain notes, such as for any length of time, the coarseness of tone, and the want of control over the junction or "break" in the voice between the "chest" and "head" registers.

T25. SPECIAL CAUTION.—The present little book is intended to serve as a monitor to all choirmasters who may recognise the difficulty spoken of in the preceding paragraph and desire to remedy it. It is therefore worth while here to repeat the caution heretofore given and to make it special by repetition, namely: that the master should be ever on the watch to guard against forcing the lower register too high in the scale beyond its proper compass, and to guard against coarseness of production.

126. SOFT SINGING.—He should also make every endeavour to obtain soft singing and a good quality of tone. This demands great watchfulness. Every time the voice is used carelessly, the chances of ever improving its quality are greatly reduced. Should the practice of using the chest voice to an undue extent be persisted in after the age of ten, the case may be considered hopeless.

127. DIFFICULTY OF JOINING THE REGISTERS.—Some boys can never conquer the difficulty of joining the registers of the voice in a smooth and even manner. They cannot pass from one register to another in the imperceptible way which marks the good singer. Boys with large, full, horn-like tone are those who experience most trouble, and their voices are most likely to be ruined by imprudent use. Soft singing is a palliative if not a cure, and constant practice of exercises on the vowel sound "oo" is the only remedy known to prevent the undue forcing of the chest register. To obtain evenness of tone throughout the compass, the boys should be made to sing the lowest octave of the lower notes softly, so as to blend with the upper register in point of quality. After a time the strength may be increased a little, but special care must be taken not to force notes from the upper note downwards, as the voice is more easily changed in this way than in the ascending scale.

128. TEMPER AND TEMPERAMENT.—The temper and temperament of certain boys greatly influence their singing. Some boys become excited, and exert themselves beyond their natural powers, and so destroy their voices. Others, from love of singing, or from a sense of duty, do more than their share of the vocal work, and so injure their voices. It is sad, but it is true, that the boys who possess the most acutely musical dispositions are those who are most likely to be affected by this ruinous practice of singing too loud.

129. THE SECRET OF TRAINING.—The golden rule in training choir boys may therefore be said to be—

Never force the chest voice at any time, and especially above



It is not too much to say

that the whole secret of training boys successfully depends upon the observance of this canon; therefore the master should be ever on the alert to enforce this rule. If he observes this and other rules contained in these pages, and adapts them to his own experiences, he will soon distinguish himself in this branch of his profession.

130. HINTS AS TO MANAGEMENT OF CHORISTERS.—One of the great trials of a choirmaster is when he finds that a boy, whose training has cost him much time and trouble, suddenly departs to another church where he is more highly paid. Any hints to prevent this disaster will therefore be welcome. In some quarters the following plan has been found successful. Choristers are paid merely a small nominal sum per quarter as salary. In addition to this a certain sum is set apart every month, and credited to each boy according to the number of marks gained by him for usefulness, behaviour, &c. This money, which must be called a free gift or Bonus, is given to the boy, provided: First, that he remains in the choir as long as his voice is useful; second, if he leaves with a satisfactory character. It will be seen by this that, as each month passes by, and the bonus money has been regularly added to, it becomes more and more to the advantage of the chorister to behave well and be as useful as possible. At any time this bonus, or part of it, may be forfeited by bad behaviour or unsatisfactory work, and this gives the choirmaster a strong hold over the boys. This bonus must never be spoken of as salary, otherwise the boys could legally claim it at any time. Each chorister is provided with a book, in which his bonus money is written at the end of every month. Another system is to have an agreement drawn up, binding the parents or guardians of the boy to pay a stipulated sum in the event of his withdrawal from the choir without the consent of the cboir authorities.

# CHAPTER XIII.

#### MARKS OF EXPRESSION.

131. SIGNS OF EXPRESSION.—The chief words employed in music to indicate expression are LOUD and QUICK, with their contrasts Soft and Slow. These are sub-divided into many degrees by the addition of words which modify them thus: moderately loud, rather quick, very soft, or somewhat slow. These expressions are sometimes written in English and sometimes in Italian.

132. Words relating to Steady Pace:—

Grave, largo, very slowly and solemnly.

Adagio, slowly and expressively.

Lento, slow.

Andante, moderately slow and smoothly (literally, "going").

Vivace, quick and lively.

Presto, very quickly.

Allegro, cheerfully.

Allegretto, moderately quick.

These words are often modified by other words, such as :--

Mosso, Con moto, with movement.

Molto, much.

Più, more.

Altering pace is indicated by the words-

Stringendo, hurrying.

Ritardando, keeping back.

Accelerando, hastening or quickening.

Rallentando, slackening.

#### 133. LOUD AND SOFT :-

Forte, loud, written f or for.

Fortissimo, as loud as possible, ff.

Piano, soft, written p or pia.

Pianissimo, as soft as possible, pp.

Crescendo, gradually increase from soft to loud.

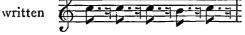
Decrescendo, gradually decreases from loud to soft.

Crescendo is sometimes indicated by the sign -

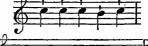
Decrescendo is sometimes indicated by the sign =

Staccato, taken off, sometimes indicated by placing dots or dashes over the notes

This signifies that the notes lose a quarter of their duration power and should be sung as though



When the dash is used



the notes lose

half their duration power and should be sung as though written

Legato, tied, the opposite to staccato. It is usually expressed by the bowed line or sign called





it is called a bind.

# 134. ABBREVIATED SIGNS:-

Accel. for accelerando, hastening or quickening.

Ad lib. for ad libitum, at will.

Cres. for crescendo, increasing.

Dim. for diminuendo, diminishing.

D. C. for da capo, from the beginning.

D. S. for dal segno, from the sign 8, and to mark a place for repetition to begin.

f for forte, loud.

ff for fortissimo, loudest.

fz for sforzando, forcing the sound.

mf for mezzo-forte, rather loud (mezzo, meaning half).

p for piano, soft.

pp for pianissimo, the softest.

Rall. for rallentando, getting slower.

Rit. for ritardando, keeping back.

Str. for stringendo, hurrying.

Other terms may be seen in the Primer of "Musical Terms."

- 135. VERSE AND FULL.—In services and anthems, certain portions intended to be sung by a single voice to a part are marked "Verse." Those parts intended to be sung by the whole of the voices are marked "Full" or Chorus. When more than one voice to a part is required, but not the whole choir, the music is marked Semi-chorus.
- 136. DECANI AND CANTORIS.—In all Cathedrals and in many churches arranged upon the Cathedral model, the choir is divided into two sections, one sitting on the South, the other on the North side of the church. That on the South is called Decani, from *Decanus* a dean, because the Dean usually sits on that side; that on the North is called Cantoris, from *Cantor* the singer, because the Precentor or the leader of the singers sits on that side.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

#### CHANTING.

- 137. THE CANTICLES.—Certain of the Canticles—namely, the Venite, Jubilate, Benedicite, Benedictus, Magnificat, Nunc dimittis, Deus Misereatur, Cantate Domino, and sometimes the Te Deum, are recited to a set composition called a Chant. Chants are Single and Double. A Double Chant is a double repetition in form of the single chant. The extra length is used for the purpose of extending the melodic phrase.
- 138. CHANTS.—The Single Chant is employed for one verse of the Canticle or Psalm. The Double Chant takes two verses for its complete performance. There are also Quadruple Chants, which are sung to four verses. Each chant, single or double, is written in phrases of seven bars of two minims each, or their value. The first half of a chant, called the *Mediation*, has three; the second, called the *Cadence*, has four bars. The double chant is this arrangement repeated.
- 139. RECITING NOTE.—The verses of the Psalms or Canticles are arranged in a peculiar way for the purposes of singing. This arrangement is called pointing. Each choir selects its own "Pointed Psalter." The first note of each half of the chant is called the Reciting Note, and it is found that the smoothest chanting is attained when as much as possible of the verses is given to the reciting note.
- 140. DIFFICULTIES OF CHANTING.—The difficulties of obtaining good chanting may be overcome with care. Every attention should be paid to the sense and meaning of the words. The recitation should never be hurried. Due attention should be paid to stops, but it should be added that too long a pause is frequently made at commas. The very slightest pause is all that is necessary. Every word should be clearly and distinctly delivered, and a slight rest should be made on those words which form the starting-point from recitation to the rhythmical part of the chant. Where the Cathedral Psalter is used, periodical attention should be called to the examples given in the Preface, in which will be found specimens of all difficult cases.
- 141. CHIEF FAULTS TO BE AVOIDED.—The reciting note should not be hurried. The pause or accent before entering upon the rhythmical portion of the chant should never be long, or too much emphasized. When there are words between the accented word and the bar, take care to enunciate them clearly. Ex.: "He shall féed me in a | green | pasture." If a "pointed" book is chosen, adhere to its principles, and avoid making impromptu alterations. Nothing affects the integrity of chanting so much as want of uniformity.
- 142. READING BEFORE SINGING.—It will be found to be very useful if the Psalms and Canticles for the day are read over first before singing them in the practice room. If it is possible to give some general idea of their meaning and intention it will greatly help the intelligent performance of them.
  - 143. DECENCY AND ORDER.—The choirmaster should be careful to impress upon the minds of his

pupils, by example even more than by precept, the importance of the service in which they are engaged. The temptation to make personal display should at all times be checked. The good effect of many a choir is marred by the persistent effort of a single member to give undue prominence to his voice. Everything should be done with the highest aim and in the quietest manner, and so the decency and order necessary for the due performance of Divine Service will be maintained.

#### CHAPTER XV.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR THE TEACHER.

- 144. (a) Each pupil should have a copy of the vocal exercises in order that his eye may follow the notes.
- (b) The teacher should not write out the singing lesson for the day on the blackboard, for he will embarrass himself and make his lesson inelastic and hampered by a boundary which will be found inconvenient at times.
- (c) It may be advisable in the course of the work to be done in voice training, to take lessons from various parts of the book as more suitable for the purpose.
- (d) This cannot be done if the lessons are written upon the blackboard beforehand, and much valuable time will be wasted while the lesson is being written out.
- (e) For ordinary demonstrations in theory lessons, such as teaching the signs and characters in music, the blackboard must be used.
- (f) It is recommended, however, to have a white board made which can be written upon with a black crayon or charcoal. This has many advantages over the black-board, inasmuch as the characters are presented to the eye in the manner most frequently met with in practice.
- (g) A square of white or light grey American cloth stretched over a board, similar to the black-board, on which the five lines of the stave are drawn with black paint will be found most convenient.
- (h) The notes and signs can be written with charcoal or soft crayons. When the lesson is over the cloth may be wiped with a wet sponge or a damp cloth.
- (i) It may be suggested that four staves be painted on the American cloth, so that if the class is advanced sufficiently to enter upon the study of harmony, the chords may be set out in four parts, each part in its proper clef.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

# MUSICAL EXERCISES.

- 145. CHARACTER OF THE EXERCISES.—These exercises, original and selected, have been arranged in stages. There are exercises in intervals, and for the cultivation of expression, and the development of the vocal organs generally. Among them will be found songs by Purcell, Scarlatti, Handel, and Mendelssohn. The tenor songs referred to in the list will be found most valuable for the development of that part of the voices of boys in which the compass of the melody lies, while the airs which follow the exercises in each stage, besides being interesting in themselves, will conduce to good phrasing and development of voice and musical expression.
  - 146. FIRST STAGE.—This stage is intended for small choirs where elaborate music is not used, but

only chants and hymn tunes, with an occasional easy anthem or chanted canticles. Only so much theory should be taught as will enable choir boys to read at sight simple tunes in keys up to four sharps and four flats. As suggested in the Preface, the choirmaster must select the system for teaching which best commends itself to his fancy.\*

147. Lessons in Breathing, &c.—It may be assumed that the boys are arranged in three rows as advised in Section 71. The first part of the lesson must always be devoted to some branch of elementary theory. This may be taught while the boys are sitting. Then for some few weeks after the formation of the class, the next part of the lesson will be occupied in teaching the proper manner of breathing. At the outset of this, the boys must be made to stand in an upright position, both feet being firmly planted on the floor. During the breathing exercises, the hands should be placed behind the back in as easy an attitude as possible, so as not to cramp the body in any way. The mouth must be slightly opened, and the air drawn gently in. When a full breath is taken, the chest, ribs, and abdomen must be enlarged and expanded. Any tendency to raise the shoulders must be considered a sign of bad breathing. beats should be counted during this process, and the breath should be taken slowly, silently, and very evenly. The breath thus drawn must be carefully retained in the body without the slightest escape, while four is counted. Then with a strong effort of will and command of the muscles, the breath must be evenly and gradually expired while another four of equal measure is counted. Thus twelve beats will be used. Four to take breath, four to hold it, and four to let it gently forth. The greatest care and patience is required at the beginning of the expiration so as to prevent too great an escape of air at first. Five minutes' practice each lesson will soon make the matter comparatively easy, and at all events effect a great improvement. The master must not be tempted to shirk this lesson, as it is of vital importance.

148. Further Lessons in Breathing.—First see that the air is taken evenly and quietly, filling the chest, ribs, and abdomen, which will enlarge themselves if the breathing is properly done. Then see that not an atom of air escapes. It is most important that the teacher should explain to the boys that considerable mental force is required to prevent the air from rushing out too quickly at the beginning of the process of expiration. The rate of respiration should be at the same pace as that of retention and of expiration of the breath.

149. Breathing and Singing.—After the breathing lessons, the boys are ready to begin singing, softly, any of the following notes

previously sounded upon the pianoforte. Four should be counted for the inspiration of the breath, then the note should be sung very softly, care being taken to reserve the breath, and not allow too much to escape at first. Each note should be sung while four is counted.

150. Beating, Breathing, and Singing.—Beating time must be practised separately at first, without the breathing or singing exercises. Begin with two in a bar, then three, then four, and when this can be done easily, automatically, and without mental effort, then six in a bar should be learnt. It should be an inflexible rule that the beating be done in such a manner as to be seen by the master during the exercise, and without labour or violent effort. The body must be kept steady, and not shaken or jerked by the movement of the hand, so that when beating is combined with singing or breathing, or both, a perfect steadiness of tone should be maintained. The beating or describing time must always be insisted on during the singing at practice.

151. Exercises in Stage One.—After these exercises, which will only occupy a few minutes in each lesson, the pupils may advance to the studies given in Stage I. At first only a few exercises will be sung,

<sup>\*</sup> As a theoretical and practical book "A Manual of Singing," by Richard Mann, can be strongly recommended; while "Rudiments of Music," No. 2 of the present series, will be found to contain everything necessary in the matter of theory.

and after a short time they should all be taken at every practice. The position most suitable for singing the exercises in Stage I. is standing with the back of the left hand placed behind the small of the back, while the right hand is raised in front to about the height of the elbow, so that the boy may beat time with ease. This position, of course, implies a desk for the music. In a school-room, this will be easily supplied; but in a vestry or choir-room, desks must be specially made. They should be of moderate height, so as to enable a boy to see his copy, even when sitting down. A sitting posture, of course, is not the best; but the master must remember that standing during a long practice is exceedingly fatiguing, and it is most desirable that the pupils should have opportunity of sitting for a few minutes now and then. These exercises should be sung to all the vowel sounds, but especially to "La," the mouth being opened as explained in Section 47. In an ascending scale above C, the mouth should be gradually opened wider.

152. CHEST AND HEAD VOICE.—The master must remember what has been already said so often, that the lower register, chest voice of boys, must not be forced upwards. This quality of voice must only be used softly, and the head voice must be strengthened and increased in compass.

The notes from A to E must always, during the early stages, be taken in the head voice only. The choirmaster's most difficult work will be found at this period, when the training and development of these few notes has to be undertaken. It will be observed that these five notes, and of course the intermediate semitones, can be sung in two ways—that is to say, either by chest or head voice. If the chest voice is used strongly the tone is coarse and unmanageable, and the remaining portion of the compass of the voice is of a totally different quality, so that the hearer is led to believe that the vocal sounds are produced by two singers. The effort necessary to force the higher notes from the chest involves an amount of physical exertion beyond the capacity of the pupil, so that painful contortions of the face are the result, and the exertion may be attended with serious effects. On the other hand, boys who take these notes with the head voice not only possess a complete and uniform compass, but they are able to sing as much as four hours in a day without the slightest sign of hoarseness or fatigue.

153. The Sound "oo."—The master should be ever on the watch when these five notes form the exercise. He should remember what has been said in Section 127, that (on account of previous bad training) should these notes be sung loudly in chest tone, one of the best means of checking it is to have all the exercises sung to the sound "oo," as in spoon. While using this sound it is absolutely impossible for boys to sing the notes mentioned in any other than the head voice, consequently this again is a matter always to be borne in mind by the master.

In vocalising the following exercises, the notes must be very evenly articulated; and from No. 27 to the end, special care must be taken to sing so slowly that each quaver can be heard distinctly. To slide over these notes indistinctly is merely a waste of time.

The exercises in the Third Stage—Nos. I to 10—are by Sir John Stainer, and by his great courtesy the author is permitted to include them in this book. They have stood the severe test of twenty years' daily use, and the writer is quite convinced that, if choristers are properly grounded in the first two stages, these ten exercises contain all that is necessary for daily practice, always taking care that scale practice is daily maintained.

# FIRST STAGE.









\* Or accompaniment may be played by three crotchets in a bar, as in preceding. 8163.

С



\* Or accompaniment may be played by four crotchets in a bar, as in preceding. 8163.

















\* Or the Accompaniment may be played by crotchets, as in the preceding.







8163.

No. 48. Air.—"BUT THOU DIDST NOT LEAVE HIS SOUL IN HELL."





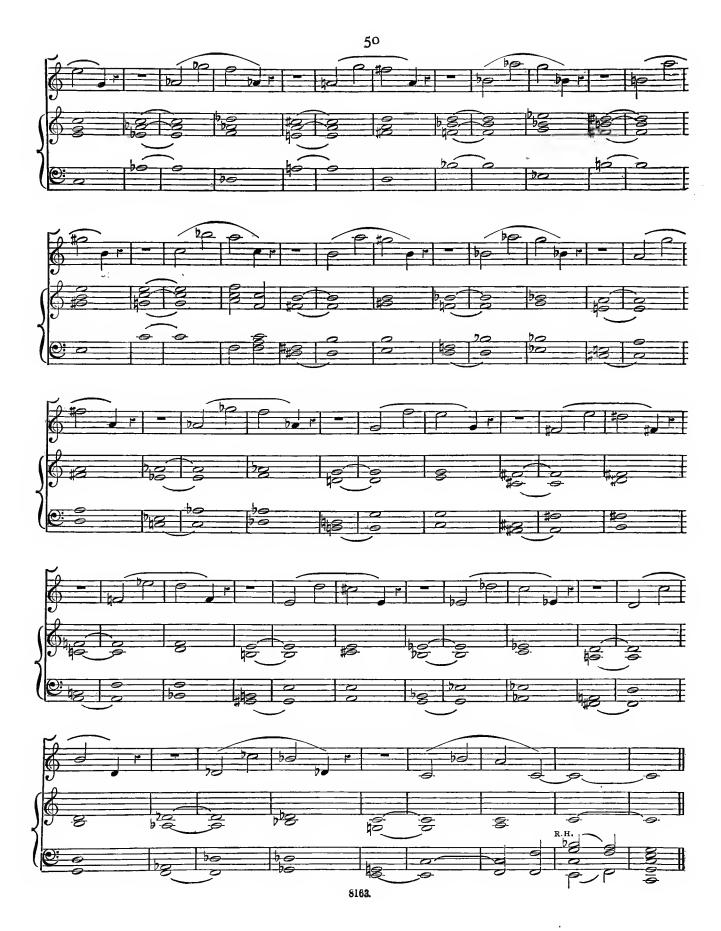
No. 49. AIR.—"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET." FROM "THE MESSIAH." HANDEL. Larghetto. Voice. PIANO. How beau - ti-ful are the feet of them that preach the gos-pel of peace, of them that preach the gos-pel of peace, and



48 SECOND STAGE.

























## No. 13.

## "FAIREST ISLE."



These words are copyright.







## "LORD, AT ALL TIMES."













No. 17. "WISE MEN FLATT'RING MAY DECEIVE YOU."







The following can also be recommended at this stage:—1. "And He shall purify" (Messiah), Handel; 2. "His yoke is easy" (Messiah), Handel; 3. "Thou shalt break them" (Messiah), Handel; 4. "Now sweetly smiling peace descends" (Deborah), Handel; 5. "If with all your hearts" (Elijah), Mendelssohn; 6. "Jerusalem" (St. Paul), Mendelssohn.







#### No. 3.





\* No. 5 may be taken after No. 10.





These Ten Exercises may also be sung in the keys of E and F.

#### MINOR SCALES.





#### No. 11.

#### "LET THE BRIGHT SERAPHIM."









No. 12. "FROM MIGHTY KINGS HE TOOK THE SPOIL."























The following will also be found excellent practice:—1. "With verdure clad" (Creation), Haydn; 2. "Then shall the righteous" (Elijah), Mendelssohn; 3. "As when the Dove" (Acis and Galatea), Handel; 4. "Let's imitate her notes above"—Duet—(Alexander's Feast), Handel; 5. "Welcome, welcome, mighty King"—Trio—(Saul), Handel

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